

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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A CHRISTMAS DREAM.

I dream of a time when the world shall be
Restored to its ancient purity;
When another Eden serene and blest,
In the light of eternal day shall rest;
When its pastures green and its waters still,
Mountain and valley, and river and rill,
Its gentle glades and its meadows broad,
Shall gleam again in the smile of God.

I dream of a time when the wrong shall fall,
And the right and the good reign over all;
When the gentle word and the kindly deed
Shall come like balm to the hearts that bleed;
When the leper shall wait at the pool no more,
Nor Lazarus starve at the rich man's door;
But man shall be true to his fellow man,
And the Levite become the Samaritan.

I dream of the time when the turmoil of creeds
Shall cease, and give place to beneficent
deeds;

When men strive their duty no more to fulfil
In speaking the Name, but in doing the will;
When hatred shall vanish and calumny end,
And man find in man but a brother and
friend;

When heart shall with heart in full sympathy
meet,

And all bow in love at the Nazarene's feet.

Thank God that the starlight of Bethlehem
Still shines through the mist of humanity's
dream;

That all through the ages the angels again
Announce the glad tidings of peace unto men.

Thank God for the mercy encompassing all,
For the love watching even the sparrows that
fall,

And the promise that stands, as it ever has
stood,

That the earth shall be filled with the glory
of God! —*Selected.*

CHRISTMAS.

In highest heaven a new-born star
Unveils its radiance from afar,
The while, upon her first-born child,
The mother of an hour has smiled.

To what a rustic nursery
Cometh this dear nativity!
No hostelry our Babe receives.
Upon the refuse of the sheaves
Is pillowed that sweet forehead, born
To feel the sharpness of the thorn.

Pious souls, in Orient warned,
Seek the Presence unadorned.
Journeying far, they would inquire
Where doth rest the mystic fire
That shall ravish land and sea
With a new divinity.

Regal gifts the pilgrims bear,—
Gold and myrrh and incense rare.
Soon the offered sweet perfume
Consecrates the stable room:
While, from out the wintry gloom,
Leaping Dawn uplifts the skies,
Shows the Babe to reverent eyes.

Soon thou, dear Child, wilt leave thy play,
Mimic dance, and roundelay;
By some deep whisper in thy breast
Sent on Truth's immortal quest;
In thy young reason, tender still,
Shaping the fatal fight with ill.

Thou shalt learn the humble trade
That for thee no cradle made;
Eat the peasant's homely fare,
His unfashioned garments wear,
While thy royalty of soul
Doth foreshadow its control
Over ages yet unborn
That shall bless thy natal morn.

Oh, joy! that far beyond the cross,
 Its bitter pain, its shame and loss,
 Above the failure men might see
 Truth's endless triumph crowneth thee!
 Such a promise in thy birth,
 Such a glory come to earth,
 Such a tragedy divine
 To be wrought in pangs of thine,
 Such redemption without end,
 Brother, Master, Saviour, Friend!

—*Julia Ward Howe.*

THE PRESSED GENTIAN.

The time of gifts has come again,
 And, on my northern window-pane,
 Outlined against the day's brief light,
 A Christmas token hangs in sight.
 The wayside travellers, as they pass,
 Mark the gray disk of clouded glass;
 And the dull blankness seems, perchance,
 Folly to their wise ignorance.

They cannot from their outlook see
 The perfect grace it hath for me;
 For there the flower, whose fringes through
 The frosty breath of autumn blew,
 Turns from without its face of bloom
 To the warm tropic of my room,
 As fair as when beside its brook
 The hue of bending skies it took.

So, from the trodden ways of earth,
 Seem some sweet souls who veil their worth,
 And offer to the careless glance
 The clouding gray of circumstance.
 They blossom best where hearth-fires burn,
 To loving eyes alone they turn
 The flowers of inward grace, that hide
 Their beauty from the world outside.

But deeper meanings come to me,
 My half-immortal flower, from thee!
 Man judges from a partial view,
 None ever yet his brother knew;
 The Eternal Eye that sees the whole
 May better read the darkened soul,
 And find, to outward sense denied,
 The flower upon its inmost side!

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

CHRISTMAS GOOD WILL.

The friends of Jesus found in their Master
 a man of vast love, who was supremely intent
 on doing good. He impressed them as abso-
 lutely obedient to God's will, which, as he is
 a Father infinitely fatherly, means good will
 to all. Jesus seemed to them to possess a
 boundless peace, because he had a measure-
 less love. He spread peace through their
 hearts and through the world, because he
 made them love each other, and because he
 established good will among men.

The beautiful prose poem which stands at

the beginning of the Gospels, and which de-
 scribes the watching shepherds and the choir
 of angels, grew naturally and spontaneously
 out of their loving and reverent hearts to
 publish all this to mankind. In this story
 the disciples report what they had found in
 Jesus, and what he had done for them. It
 is their explanation of his character and
 mission. They made the angels sing of peace
 as the reward of good will, because he had
 led them to peace through good will. This
 is history and philosophy stated poetically.

Christmas is the festival of good will. It
 began in a song of good will; it proceeds by
 services of good will; it will have accom-
 plished its mission only when good will shall
 have become universal in the world. The
 peace of God, of which the song prophesies,
 was promised to men of good will. This
 holy day makes for peace on earth, because
 the children of men are at work doing good.

At Christmastide, we march under the
 banner of good will. We forget ourselves
 and think of others. It is the time of joy,
 because it is the time of love. The divinest
 element in our being becomes the supreme
 Lord of Life to us; and, while working for
 others, the universe crowns us with gladness.
 It is the time when the heart is master, there-
 fore it is a season of blessedness.

The child that plans a gift for its mother
 grows in divine grace: the good act multiplies
 its resources of goodness. The parent who
 prepares a pleasure for her child opens the
 door into paradise. The hand that reaches
 out a gift does not come back empty, but
 equipped with new graciousness. We grow
 by what we bestow. As one pendulum, when
 started swinging, will cause its neighbors to
 move, so, when we ring one tiny bell of joy
 in a human soul, a chime of bells is set to
 ringing out sweet music in our hearts and
 all about us.

What glorious good cheer fills the Christ-
 mas time! We forget our aches and pains,
 our hardships and disappointments, even our
 age and enmities. Tears give place to smiles,
 laughter chases away gloom, and the voice of
 repining is drowned in the merry sounds of
 rejoicing. And why? Because we are out
 in the world looking for some one to bless.
 Because we are secretly planning pleasurable
 surprises for friend and parent. Because we
 yield ourselves to love, and do the things that
 make others happy. Because, in short, we
 live the free, sunny, helpful life of good will.

And, having found it so pleasant and prof-
 itable to live for others this one day, what a
 glorious thing it would be if we should make
 this spirit the habit of our daily lives! If we
 should think of others as much all through

the year as we do on Christmas Eve, then every morning would bring its dayspring of joy. If we should obey the heart all the time, we should have a holy year instead of a holy day.

If the hand that brings back to us so much joy when reached out in love with a gift should only keep right on repeating the action, if good will should become the habit of our lives, what homes we should have, so sweet, and tender, and gracious! What communities we should have, so friendly, virtuous, and rich in the joys of the spirit! What nations we should have, so peaceful, powerful, and mutually helpful—the wastes of war stopped and the destroying hatreds put away!

Why not, then, try in our little corner to keep alive the good cheer that comes from the good will of Christmas? This is the best lesson we can learn on Christmas Day; this is the divinest thing we can do the coming year.—*Rev. J. H. Crooker, D.D.*

THE STILL HOUR.

CHRISTMAS.

"Peace on the earth, good will to men!"

Before us goes the star
That leads us on to holier births
And life diviner far.

Ye men of strife, forget to-day
Your harshness and your hate;
Too long ye stay the promised years
For which the nations wait!

And ye upon the tented field,
Sheathe, sheathe, to-day the sword!
By love, and not by might, shall come
The kingdom of the Lord.

O star of human faith and hope,
Thy light shall lead us on,
Until it fades in morning's glow,
And heaven on earth is won.

—*W. C. Gannett.*

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall

find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.—*Luke.*

Sing, ye bright heralds from above,
Your chorals of good will and love
Our ready hearts to win!
Ring bells of Christ, from sea to sea,
With all your festal melody
And bring the Christmas in!
—*Edward A. Church.*

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!
—*Longfellow.*

Kindness is the music of good will to men, and on this harp the smallest fingers may play Heaven's sweetest tunes on earth.—*Elihu Burritt.*

The old year is fast slipping back behind us. We cannot stay it if we would. We must go forth and leave our past. Let us go forth nobly. Let us go as those whom greater thoughts and greater deeds await beyond.—*Phillips Brooks.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

OFFERS.

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, Mass., offers the following books: "Life of Queen Elizabeth," Agnes Strickland; "Masterman Ready," Captain Marryat; "Tanglewood Tales," Hawthorne; "Flower Fables," Alcott; "Through the Looking-Glass," Lewis Carroll; "Jackanapes" (three copies), Juliana Horatio Ewing; "Cranford," Mrs. Gaskell.

Mrs. S. B. Marshall, 6 Greenville Street, Roxbury, Mass., offers: "The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life," Hannah Whitall Smith.

REQUESTS.

1. Mrs. A. C. Nottinger, Thornville, Ohio, Route 5, is a bed-ridden invalid and would be pleased to have the friends remember her during the holidays. She has a little book-case, and books would be appreciated so much to help her fill it. She also would be very grateful for letters and cards, as she gets so lonely.

2. Mrs. Carrie S. Stowell, Magnolia, Colorado, will be grateful for *Modern Priscilla*, current numbers.

3. Mr. Hilliard Nabors, Bullard, Texas, R. 1, Box 79, asks for general reading.

4. Mrs. Oscar L. Blaisdell, St. Albans, Maine, will be especially thankful this year for the little things that we have in past years sent to Mrs. H. O. Blaisdell, as she will carry on the good work by giving the children their tree at Christmas, thus keeping the memory of Mrs. Blaisdell fresh in the minds of those to whom she had given so much of her strength and love.

5. I am writing to the *Cheerful Letter* for the first time. I am a widow with two boys. I should like some friend to send me some reading for the boys, to interest them so they will stay at home. I am not able to buy books for them. The books I ask for would be very much appreciated: "A Tale of Two Cities," "Ten Nights in a Bar-room," or any good reading. And I should love very much to hear from the *Cheerful Letter* friends. I should be glad to receive some calico for patchwork, as I have lonely hours to spend. (Mrs.) S. C. Swecker, Foster Falls, Virginia, Box 61.

6. Mrs. W. F. Galloway, Swepsonville, North Carolina, has started a little reading circle for working girls. This winter we are reading Shakespeare. Could you assist us in getting the books? Any second-hand work would be appreciated very much.

7. I am coming again asking for something to read, as winter is coming on and I am very lonely. I wish to thank those that have sent me reading; and will they please send me more? I like to read so well and have got so I cannot visit but very little. I shall be sixty-six years old the nineteenth of December. Should appreciate any remembrance on that day. (Mrs.) Bettie A. Short, Elamsville, Virginia.

8. I wish to thank those who have so kindly sent me reading during the last six months.

I have received some without knowing who sent it, as there was no name signed. I wish to thank them through the *Cheerful Letter*, and I hope they will not forget a lonely friend, as my husband is away from home. I should appreciate some little scraps of calico and gingham for patchwork. I hope some friends will continue writing to me, as it passes lonely and long hours away for me. I hope the kind ones will remember me. Best wishes to my *Cheerful Letter* friends. (Mrs.) Creasie Marshall, Foster Falls, Virginia.

9. I should like some school-books for my children, and also other books to read. I have recently changed my address to Dodson, Virginia. (Mrs.) Sarah M. Thomas, Dodson, Virginia.

10. I have received some magazines and some letters. All of them I enjoyed very much. I should like to have "Felix O'Day," and "Twenty Years After," by Dumas. Also any other reading matter. Mrs. A. C. Bradshan, Kerr, North Carolina, R. F. D.

11. Current numbers of *Good Housekeeping* will be appreciated by Mrs. S. G. Peake, Halladay, Virginia.

12. Will some one send *Mothers' Magazine*, current numbers, to Mrs. Ennis Pegram, Canton, North Carolina? The friend who has been sending is unable now to continue.

13. Mrs. G. Lee Roberson, Elamsville, Virginia, Box 22, asks for any reading suitable for her husband, who is in poor health. They live back in the mountains and get very lonely.

14. Mrs. W. R. Eanes, Bassett, Virginia, asks for Frye's "Higher Geography," Ritchie's "Human Physiology," Emerson's and Bender's "Modern English."

15. I have had so much trouble since I last wrote you. My husband died in May after four months' illness. I have received many kind letters and remembrances from my friends, and I want them all to know how thankful I am to them for their kindness. I have not been well at all this summer; not sick, just tired out. We have had such a hot dry summer. Crops are short, while our cotton is bringing a better price than it did last season. We are not making much of it; times are hard with us. I shall try to have my Christmas tree as usual, and I hope my friends will not forget us. I should very much like to have the books "Freckles" and "Laddie" for our school library. I mention

those as I have heard so many wish for them. We shall be glad to get any books any one can send. Please do not forget us. May God bless you all. Mrs. J. Porter, Doerun, Colquitt County, Georgia, R. F. D. No. 3.

16. Grace Gilbert asks for a story book and the *Cheerful Letter*. Address at Sandidges, Virginia.

17. Mrs. Pruda Hinton, Moclips, Washington, living thirty miles from the nearest town in a very quiet place, asks for sheet music and the *Étude*. Her children, girls, fourteen, thirteen, and six years of age, would like *Youth's Companion*. *Ladies' Home Journal* would also be acceptable.

18. Mrs. W. P. Morgan, Snyder, Oklahoma, will be glad of "Tale of Two Cities."

19. Mrs. Charles C. Owen, Whittles, Virginia, asks for cards and pictures for her children, ranging from ten to two years.

20. Grimm's "Fairy Tales" is asked for by Mrs. Emma Blankinship, Sandy Level, Virginia.

21. Mrs. Coradell Hatchell, Cordell, Oklahoma, asks for *Woman's Home Companion*, *Good Housekeeping*, or *Pictorial Review*, which she will pass on to others.

22. Grace Snider, Route 1, Tellico Plains, Tennessee, an orphan, will be glad of anything for herself and little brother and sister.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Mrs. Dora Bryant, from Oakland City to Boonville, Indiana.

NOTICE.

The Committee would be grateful for subscriptions to the *Cheerful Letter* to be sent directly to the lonely, from the office. The requests far exceed our supply, and as it means so much to those "shut-ins and shut-outs," we should be glad to fill these requests.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

HOW TO READ.

(Continued from last number.)

Now I must show you how to go to work by supposing you have been interested in some particular passage. Let us take a passage from Macaulay. It is a brilliant passage, rather too ornate for daily food, but not amiss for a luxury, more than candied

orange is after a state dinner. He is speaking of the worldly wisdom and skilful human policy of the method of organization of the Roman Catholic Church. He says:—

"The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, when the camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century, to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice was modern when compared to the Papacy; and the Republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine; and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. . . .

"She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor, when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

I. We will not begin by considering the wisdom or the mistake of the general opinion here laid down. We will begin by trying to make out what is the real meaning of the leading words employed. Look carefully along the sentence, and see if you are quite sure of what is meant by such terms as "the Roman Catholic Church," "the Pantheon," "the Flavian amphitheatre," "the Supreme Pontiffs," "the Pope who crowned Napoleon," "the Pope who crowned Pepin," "the Republic of Venice," "the missionaries who landed in Kent," "Augustine," "the Saxon had set foot in Britain," "the Frank had passed the Rhine," "Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch," "idols in Mecca," "New Zealand," "London Bridge," "St. Paul's."

For really working up a subject—and this

sentence now is to be our subject—I advise a blank book, and, for my part, I like to write down the key words or questions, in a vertical line, quite far apart from each other, on the first pages. You will see why if you will read on.

II. Now go to work on this list. What do you really know about the organization of the Roman Catholic Church? If you find you are vague about it, that such knowledge as you have is only half knowledge, which is no knowledge, read till you are clear. Much information is not necessary, but good, as far as it goes, is necessary on any subject. This is a controverted subject. You ought to try, therefore, to read some statement by a Catholic author, and some statement by a Protestant. To find out what to read on this or any subject, there are different clews.

1. Any encyclopædia, good or bad, will set you on the trail. Most of you have or can have an encyclopædia at command. There are one-volume encyclopædias better than nothing, which are very cheap. You can pick up an edition of the old *Encyclopædia Americana*, in twelve volumes, for ten or twelve dollars. Or you can buy Appleton's, which is really quite good, for sixty dollars a set. I do not mean to have you rest on any encyclopædia, but you will find one at the start an excellent guide-post. Suppose you have the old *Encyclopædia Americana*. You will find there that the "Roman Catholic Church" is treated by two writers,—one a Protestant, and one a Catholic. Read both and note in your book such allusions as interest you, which you want more light upon. Do not note everything which you do not know, for then you cannot get forward. But note all that specially interests you. For instance, it seems that the Roman Catholic Church is not so called by that church itself. The officers of that church might call it the Roman Church, or the Catholic Church, but would not call it the Roman Catholic Church. At the Congress of Vienna, Cardinal Consalvi objected to the joint use of the words Roman Catholic Church. Do you know what the Congress of Vienna was? No? Then make a memorandum, if you want to know. We might put in another for Cardinal Consalvi. He was a man, who had a father and a mother, perhaps brothers and sisters. He will give us a little human interest, if we stop to look him up. But do not stop for him now. Work through "Roman Catholic Church," and keep these memoranda in your book for another day.

2. Quite different from the encyclopædia is another book of reference, "Poole's Index."

This is a general index to seventy-three magazines and reviews. Now a great deal of the best work of this century has been put into such journals. A reference, then, to "Poole's Index" is a reference to some of the best separate papers on the subjects which for many years had most interest for the world of reading men and women. Let us try "Poole's Index" on "The Republic of Venice." There are references to articles on Venice in the *New England Magazine*, in the *Pamphleteer*, in the *Monthly Review*, *Edinburgh, Quarterly*, *Westminster*, and *DeBow's Reviews*. Copy all these references carefully, if you have any chance at any time of access to any of these journals. It is not, you know, at all necessary to have them in the house. Probably there is some friend's collection or public library where you can find one or more of them. If you live in or near Boston, or New York, or Philadelphia, or Charleston, or New Orleans, or Cincinnati, or Chicago, or St. Louis, or Ithaca, you can find every one.—"*How To Do It*," by E. E. Hale.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE ELBERFELDT HORSES.

Some twenty years ago there lived in Berlin an old misanthrope named Wilhelm von Osten. He was a man with a small private income, a little eccentric in his ways, and obsessed by one idea, the intelligence of animals. He began by undertaking the education of a horse that gave him no very definite results. But, in 1900, he became the owner of a Russian stallion who, under the name of Hans, to which was soon added the Homeric and well-earned prefix of Kluge, or Clever, was destined to upset all our notions of animal psychology and to raise questions that rank among the most unexpected and the most absorbing problems which man has yet encountered. After making him familiar with various common ideas, such as right, left, top, bottom, and so on, his master began to teach him arithmetic by the intuitive method. Hans was brought to a table on which were placed first one, then two, then several small skittles. Von Osten, kneeling beside Hans, uttered the corresponding numbers, at the same time making him strike as many blows with his hoof as there were skittles on the table. Before long, the skittles were replaced by figures written on a blackboard. The results were astonishing. The horse was capable not only of counting (that is to say, of striking as many blows as he was asked),

but also of himself making real calculations, of solving little problems.

But Hans could do more than mere sums: he knew how to read; he was a musician, distinguishing between harmonious and dissonant chords. He also had an extraordinary memory: he could tell the date of each day of the current week. In short, he got through all the tasks which an intelligent schoolboy of fourteen is able to perform. The rumor of these curious experiments soon spread; and visitors flocked to the little stable-yard in which Von Osten kept his singular pupil at work. The newspapers took the matter up; and a fierce controversy broke forth between those who believed in the genuineness of the phenomenon and those who saw no more in it than a bare-faced fraud. A scientific committee was appointed in 1904, consisting of professors of psychology and physiology, of the director of a zoological garden, of a circus manager, and of veterinary surgeons and cavalry officers. The committee discovered nothing suspicious, but ventured upon no explanation. A second committee was then appointed, numbering among its members Herr Oskar Pfungst, of the Berlin psychological laboratory. Herr Pfungst, after a long series of experiments, drew up a voluminous and crushing report, in which he maintained that the horse was gifted with no intelligence, that it did not recognize either letters or figures, that it really knew neither how to calculate nor how to count, but merely obeyed the imperceptible, infinitesimal, and unconscious signs which escaped from its master.

Public opinion veered round suddenly and completely. People felt a sort of half-cowardly relief at beholding the prompt collapse of a miracle which was threatening to throw confusion into the self-satisfied little fold of established truths. Poor Von Osten protested in vain: no one listened to him; the verdict was given. He never recovered from this official blow. He became the laughing-stock of all those whom he had at first astounded; and he died, lonely and embittered, on the 29th of June, 1909, at the age of seventy-one. But he left a disciple whose faith had not been shaken by the general defection. A well-to-do Elberfeld manufacturer, Herr Krall, had taken a great interest in Von Osten's labors and, during the latter years of the old man's life, had eagerly followed and even on occasion directed the education of the wonderful stallion. Von Osten left Kluge Hans to him by will; on his own side, Krall had bought two Arab stallions, Muhamed and Zarif, whose prowess soon surpassed that of the pioneer. The

whole question was reopened, events took a vigorous and decisive turn, and, instead of a weary, eccentric old man, discouraged almost to sullenness and with no weapons for the struggle, the critics of the miracle found themselves faced by a new adversary, young and high-spirited, endowed with remarkable scientific gifts, quick-witted, scholarly, and well able to defend himself.

His educational methods also differ materially from Von Osten's. Krall, on the other hand, adores his pupils; and this atmosphere of affection has in a manner of speaking humanized them. There are no longer those sudden movements of wild panic which reveal the ancestral dread of man in the quietest and best-trained horse. He talks to them long and tenderly, as a father might talk to his children, and we have the strange feeling that they listen to all that he says and understand it. If they appear not to grasp an explanation or a demonstration, he will begin it all over again, analyze it, paraphrase it ten times in succession, with the patience of a mother. And so their progress has been incomparably swifter and more astounding than that of old Hans. Within a fortnight of the first lesson, Muhamed did simple little addition and subtraction sums quite correctly. He had learned to distinguish the tens from the units, striking the latter with his right foot and the former with his left. He knew the meaning of the symbols plus and minus. Four days later, he was beginning multiplication and division. In four months he knew how to extract square and cubic roots; and, soon after, he learned to spell and read by means of the conventional alphabet devised by Krall. This alphabet, at the first glance, seems rather complicated. For that matter, it is only a makeshift; but how could one find anything better? The unfortunate horse, who is almost voiceless, has only one way in which to express himself: a clumsy hoof, which was not created to put thought into words. It became necessary, therefore, to contrive, as in a table-turning, a special alphabet, in which each letter is designated by a certain number of blows struck by the right foot and the left.

To mark the letter E, for instance, the stallion will strike one blow with his left foot and one with his right; for the letter L, two blows with his left foot and three with his right; and so on. The horses have this alphabet so deeply imprinted in their memory that, practically speaking, they never make a mistake; and they strike their hoofs so quickly, one after the other, that at first one has some difficulty in follow-

ing them. Muhamed and Zarif—for Zarif's progress was almost equal to that of his fellow-pupil, though he seems a little less gifted from the standpoint of higher mathematics—Muhamed and Zarif in this way reproduce the words spoken in their presence, spell the names of their visitors, reply to questions put to them, and sometimes make little observations to which we will return presently. They have created for their own use an inconceivably fantastic and phonetic system of spelling which they stubbornly refuse to relinquish and which often makes their writing rather difficult to read. Deeming most of the vowels useless, they keep almost exclusively to the consonants; thus Zucker, for instance, becomes Z, K, R; Pferd, P, F, R, T or F, R, T; and so on.

To complete this short preamble, it is right to add that, for some time past, the case of the Elberfeld horses no longer stands quite alone. There exists at Mannheim a dog of rather doubtful breed who performs almost the same feats as his equine rivals. He is less advanced than they in arithmetic, but does little additions, subtractions, and multiplications of one or two figures correctly. He reads and writes by tapping with his paw, in accordance with an alphabet which, it appears, he has thought out for himself; and his spelling also is simplified and phoneticized to the utmost. He distinguishes the colors in a bunch of flowers, counts the money in a purse, and separates the marks from the pfennigs. He knows how to seek and find words to define the object or the picture placed before him. You show him, for instance, a bouquet in a vase and ask him what it is.

"A glass with little flowers," he replies. And his answers are often curiously spontaneous and original. In the course of a reading exercise in which the word Herbst, autumn, chanced to attract attention, Professor William Mackenzie asked him if he could explain what autumn was.

"It is the time when there are apples," Rolf replied.

On the same occasion, the same professor, without knowing what it represented, held out to him a card marked with red and blue squares.

"What's this?"

"Blue, red, lots of cubes," replied the dog.

—Maeterlinck.

An angry word is like a letter put into the post—once dropped it is impossible to recall it.

BIOGRAPHY.

THE CHARACTER AND WRITINGS OF JOHN MILTON.

(Continued from last number.)

Milton then goes on to speak of his consciousness of possessing great poetical powers, which he was most anxious to cultivate. Of these he speaks thus magnificently:—

"These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God rarely bestowed, but yet to some, though most abuse, in every nation; and are of power, —to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue, and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship; lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtilities and refluxes of man's thoughts from within; all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe."

He then gives intimations of his having proposed to himself a great poetical work, "a work," he says,—

"Not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapors of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the rencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her syren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases."

He then closes with a passage, showing from what principles he forsook these delightful studies for controversy:—

"I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still

air of delightful studies. . . . But were it the meanest underservice, if God by his secretary conscience enjoin it, it were sad for me if I should draw back; for me especially, now when all men offer their aid to help, ease, and lighten the difficult labors of the church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions, till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either strait perjure or split his faith, I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing."

These passages, replete with Milton's genius and greatness of soul, show us the influences and motives under which his prose works were written, and help us to interpret passages, which, if taken separately, might justify us in ascribing to him a character of excessive indignation and scorn.

Milton's most celebrated prose work is his "Areopagitica, or a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," a noble work indeed, a precious manual of freedom, an arsenal of immortal weapons for the defence of man's highest prerogative, intellectual liberty. His "Reformation in England" and "Reason of Church Government" are the most important theological treatises published during his life. They were his earliest prose compositions, and thrown off with much haste, and on these accounts are more chargeable with defects of style than any other of his writings. But these, with all their defects, abound in strong and elevated thought, and in power and felicity of expression. Their great blemish is an inequality of style, often springing from the conflict and opposition of the impulses under which he wrote. It is not uncommon to find, in the same sentence, his affluent genius pouring forth magnificent images and expressions, and suddenly his deep scorn for his opponents, suggesting and throwing into the midst of this splendor sarcasms and degrading comparisons altogether at variance with the general strain. From this cause, and from negligence, many powerful passages in his prose writings are marred by an incongruous mixture of unworthy allusions and phrases. In the close of his first work, that on "Reformation in England," he breaks out into an invocation and prayer to the Supreme Being, from which we extract a passage containing a remarkable intimation of his having meditated some

great poetical enterprise from his earliest years, and giving full promise of that grandeur of thought and language which characterizes "Paradise Lost." Having "lifted up his hands to that eternal and propitious Throne, where nothing is readier than grace and refuge to the distresses of mortal suppliants," and besought God to perfect the work of civil and religious deliverance begun in England, he proceeds thus:—

"Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, *some one may perhaps be heard* offering at high strains in new and lofty measures, to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies, and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages, whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her old vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation, to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when Thou, the eternal and shortly expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of the world, and, distributing national honors and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they undoubtedly, that by their labors, counsels, and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive, above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal addition of principalities, legions, and thrones into their glorious titles, and, in supereminence of beatific vision, progressing the dateless and irrevoluble circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss, in overmeasure for ever."

We have not time to speak of Milton's political treatises. We close our brief remarks on his prose writings, with recommending them to all who can enjoy great beauties in the neighborhood of great faults, and who would learn the compass, energy, and richness of our language; and still more do we recommend them to those who desire to nourish in their breast magnanimity of sentiment and an unquenchable love of freedom. They bear the impress of that seal by which genius distinguishes its productions from works of learning and taste. The great and decisive test of genius is, that it calls forth *power* in the souls of others. It not merely gives knowledge, but breathes energy. There are authors, and among these Milton holds the highest rank, in approaching whom we are conscious of an excess of intellectual strength. A

"virtue goes out" from them. We discern more clearly, not merely because a new light is thrown over objects, but because our own vision is strengthened. Sometimes a single word, spoken by the voice of genius, goes far into the heart. A hint, a suggestion, an undefined delicacy of expression, teaches more than we gather from volumes of less gifted men. The works which we should chiefly study, are not those which contain the greatest fund of knowledge, but those which raise us into sympathy with the intellectual energy of the author, and through which a great mind multiplies itself, as it were, in the reader. Milton's prose works are imbued as really, if not as thoroughly, as his poetry, with this quickening power, and they will richly reward those who are receptive of this influence.

—*William Ellery Channing.*

THE SNOWBIRDS.

When winter winds are blowing,
And clouds are full of snow,
There comes a flock of little birds
A-flying to and fro.
About the withered garden,
Around the naked field,
In any wayside shrub or tree
That may a berry yield,
You'll see them flitting, flitting,
And hear their merry song;
The scattered crumbs of summer's feast
Feed winter's birdlings long.

But when snow-drifts cover
The garden and the field,
When all the shrubs are cased in ice,
And every brook is sealed,
Then come the little snowbirds,
As beggars, to your door;
They pick up every tiny crumb,
With eager chirps for more.
Give them a hearty welcome!
It surely were not good
That they who sing in winter time
Should ever lack for food.

—*The Humane Journal.*

CHRISTMAS-DAY REFLECTIONS.

If Jesus of Nazareth were now living on our earth, he would on this day have seen eighteen hundred and ninety-eight of his own birthdays; and, with the recurrence, he would have seen, year by year, the wonderful changes and events of our revolving world. He would have seen man's new discoveries of the vaster worlds, parts of his Father's

universe, and of the inflexible laws that hold and guide them obedient in their majestic orbits.

He would have seen the birth, growth, and death of new nations, new dynasties, vast kingdoms, great republics, and mighty empires. He would have seen the destruction of that Jerusalem that "accepted him not," and the scattering of her children all over the earth as a great people without a land, at length finding their safest home in our land, and beneath the shadow of his wing. He would have seen the fall of the Rome whose officers condemned him to the cross without a fault, and the rise and power of another Rome, claiming in his name to hold the keys of heaven and to sway the conscience of mankind.

He would have seen the long and fearful struggle of Christian and Saracen over the possession of his own tomb; the age of chivalry and the degradation of serfdom; the invention of gunpowder, by which the serf rose slowly to his manhood; the ignorance of the Dark Ages; the revival of learning, and the conquests of science; the wane of superstition; the exaltation of his religion and the elevation by it of the masses of mankind; the aggrandizement of thrones and their destruction; the discovery of new continents; the founding therein of new states, new empires, and new republics; the birth of new liberty and new ideas of the rights of man, and the consequent elevation of manhood; the marvellous triumphs of mind over matter; the innumerable inventions of genius in the mastery of steam; the subjugation of electricity; the conquest of time and distance; the growth of philosophy; the victories of medicine in the arrest and palliation of pestilence and disease; the triumphs of surgery in the relief of human suffering; the elevation of all the humanities devoted to the knowledge and happiness of man; the administration of justice in new and better ways; the growth of charity in all her sweet and beautiful forms; the elevation of woman in all her rights, powers, and influences, with the sure promise of her just equality of rights before the law.

All these he would have seen; and in them he would see the spirit and power of the holy religion he founded as the greatest and truest operating cause in all our world's advancement, and in the growth of man in the wisdom and virtue that ensure the equality of rights of conscience and of liberty to all men.

But Jesus of Nazareth is not here in the form in which he once walked the earth. But on this his birthday we own, with joy, the power, the beauty, and the holiness of his

religion, and the universal blessing it has been to all the races of mankind.—*Noah Davis.*

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, 45 Spring Lane, Canton, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication) and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

In cave, but not in hut.
In house, but not in barn.
In water, but not in ice.
In eight, but not in two.
In salt, but not in pepper.
In ten, but not in six.
In mud, but not in dust.
In land, but not in hill.
In seven, but not in one.
My *whole* is a holiday enjoyed by all.

II.

CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.

1. Joyful Orator.
2. Hit Napoleon.
3. Interrupted Ploughing.
4. Conceited Senator.
5. Glorifies Adventurous Heroes.

III.

DECEMBER GEOGRAPHY.

(1)	-	-	*	-	
(2)	-	-	11	-	* 16
(3)	15	-	-	-	- * -
(4)	-	4	5	-	- * -
(5)	-	-	-	-	14 * 8
(6)	-	-	13	-	2 * -
(7)	-	*	-	-	- -
(8)	-	-	*	-	- -
(9)	-	6	10	-	* 3 - -
(10)	-	-	-	1	9 * -
(11)	12	7	*	-	- -
(12)	-	-	-	*	- - -

Fill the diagram with the names of certain countries from the six states that were admitted in December. Their county seats, in order, are: (1) Golconda; (2) Lexington; (3) Mayersville; (4) Moulton; (5) Centerville; (6) Clarendon; (7) Goshen; (8) Hallettsville; (9) Emmetsburg; (10) Elizabethtown;

(11) Sherwood; (12) Prattville. As a further guide, here is named one county that is contiguous to each, in order: (1) Johnson; (2) Yazoo; (3) Warren; (4) Franklin; (5) Monroe; (6) Gray; (7) Kosciusko; (8) De Witt; (9) Pocahontas; (10) Gallatin; (11) Tom Green; (12) Chilton. When the selection is correctly made, and written as shown by the diagram, the star path downward will spell a state that ratified the constitution in December; the initials will spell its metropolis; the numbered letters 1 to 8 a state that ratified in December; 9 to 16 a state admitted in December.—*American Boy.*

IV.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Confused, unintelligible talk.
To reach a place.
Having little distance from side to side.
Want of order or neatness.
Pertaining to the Alps.
The capital of Saskatchewan.
At a distance.
My *whole* midwinter brings—'tis ne'er delayed;
In different way I pray you mark my meaning's twice conveyed.

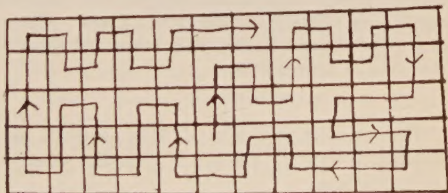
—Contributed.

Answers to puzzles in the November number.

I. LITERARY CONTEST.—St. Botolph's Town, Cap'n Eri, David Balfour, House of a Thousand Candles, Lieutenant Governor, Rob Roy, David Harum, Secrets of the Hohenzollerns.

II. QUESTIONS IN HISTORY.—1. William III. of Orange. 2. Philip Van Artevelt of Ghent. 3. Nathan Hale.

III. LABYRINTH OF LETTERS.—



Turkey, Soup, Cranberry Sauce, Potatoes, Pie, Ice Cream, Grapes, Celery.

IV. FORTUNE TELLING.—1. Bell. 2. Carrie. 3. Grace. 4. Hattie. 5. Flora.

V. SQUARE.—D R A B
R I C E
A C H E
B E E T

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins, or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable.

The present address of Mrs. Emma M. Backus is 633 3d Street, North, St. Petersburg, Florida.

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The regular monthly meeting of The Cheerful Letter Exchange will be held on Friday, December 3, at 10.30 A.M., at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. All interested are cordially invited to be present.

The work has grown so it is no longer easy for the Book Club Secretary to care for all that pertains to the Club. The following ladies have volunteered to take charge of the different interests: For Bibles, either for requests or offers, apply to Mrs. Laura Hallett, Myrtle Terrace, Winchester, Mass. For scraps for patchwork, for requests or offers, to Mrs. E. H. Brigham, 72 Walnut Street, Brookline, Mass. For music, for requests or offers, to Mrs. Thomas Lacey, 145 Grand View Avenue, Wollaston, Mass.

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THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one may ask for money, clothing, or other articles, except books and magazines.

The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.

The Chairman, Mrs. George G. Saville, is at the rooms, 25 Beacon Street, on Thursday afternoons, from 2 until 4.30 P.M.

In sending subscriptions for the *Cheerful Letter*, address The Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Subscriptions, 50 cents a year.

Chairman of Cheerful Letter Exchange, Mrs. George G. Saville, 33 Saville Ave., Quincy, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke.

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